



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

DÜSSELDORF • GERMANY

Newsletter for English Teachers February 2006

This Newsletter for English Teachers is a monthly publication by the Information Resource Centers in Germany. It focuses on American Studies topics of relevance to our academic audiences.

In this issue:

Feature of the Month: Intellectual Property Rights * Volunteerism in the U.S. *
African American History Month * State of the Union Address *
Article and Web Site Suggestions * Meet the Author: Literary Readings in Köln

Feature of the Month: Intellectual Property Rights

WHY PROTECTING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS MATTERS

Intellectual property issues are getting more and more attention these days. Unfortunately, far too often the issues are framed in such a way as to highlight controversy and polarize debate. In fact, there is much about intellectual property protection on which everyone can agree.

The essential idea behind a copyright is simple: Artists and creators should be able to enjoy the fruits of their labor for a specified time period, after which the material becomes available for public use. Society benefits because this incentive to create will yield a rich and varied cultural menu for its citizens. Indeed, one can say that copyright protection is a necessary ingredient for ensuring cultural wealth in our societies.

While there has been much press play recently regarding on-line downloading of music and movies in developed countries like the United States, in fact it is in the developing world that much of the serious damage is being done. Many new musical voices, new authors, and new stories on film around the world have never been made available, simply because the incentives were not there for these artists to take a risk. They have known that whatever they produce will be immediately pirated -- stolen -- and they will not be provided the means to develop their talent.

This is not an abstract argument: It has happened on all continents. A good example is Hong Kong, where a thriving movie industry was so hurt by rampant piracy that, just a few years ago, observers were predicting it would disappear from the filmmaking map. Today, the industry is in better shape and moviegoers around the world enjoy new and



Intellectual property symbols in the United States: copyright (©), registered trademark (®), and trademark (TM). (Geoff Brighthing/Getty Images)

exciting releases primarily because Hong Kong authorities took decisive action to combat the piracy problem. Studios in Bangladesh's "Dhaliwood" movie industry went on strike in March 2004 to protest the problem of piracy and demand action by the government. Similar developments have taken place in the world of music. Ethiopian musicians went on a seven-month strike in 2003 to press for better anti-piracy measures from the government. These artists all understood the importance of protecting their works from pirates.

Read more at <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/intelprp/protecting.htm>

Why Protecting Intellectual Property Rights Matters. Anthony E. Wayne.

In: *Focus on Intellectual Property Rights. U.S. Dept of State, January 2006*

THE CHALLENGE OF COPYRIGHT IN THE DIGITAL AGE



U.S. rapper Ludacris surveying his songs on a pay-to-download music site.
(AP/WWP)

Since its inception, copyright law has responded to technological change. Today, the changes that are grabbing all the headlines relate to digital technology and digital communications networks, such as the Internet and personal computers. These technologies, like many innovations, are both promising and potentially harmful to various parties interested in the use and exploitation of works of authorship, from books and music to films and web pages. There is no doubt that the issues related to achieving the right balance between these interests in light of recent

developments are daunting and justifiably can be described as "new" or "unique." But, at the same time, they are merely one step in a journey of continual and successful adaptation that characterizes the history of copyright law.

Time and again over the last two centuries, the subject matter of copyright has embraced new forms of authorship. Photography, cinematography, electronic databases, and computer programs are some examples. In each case, policy-makers ultimately were able to look beyond the particular technology or medium of expression in order to recognize the common thread of creative authorship that runs through all of copyright.

The challenge of copyright in the digital age is to preserve the author's and rights holder's incentive to create new works and use new technologies to distribute them to users and consumers in the face of such a competitive threat from the illicit use of technology by infringers. It also involves making sure that beneficial uses of works are not being needlessly stifled by a copyright system rendered inefficient by the advance of new technology.

Read more at <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/intelprp/challenge.htm>

The Challenge of Copyright in the Digital Age. Marybeth Peters.

In: *Focus on Intellectual Property Rights. U.S. Dept. of State/IIP, January 2006*

(This article examines some of the digital issues faced by copyright law today.)

WEBCHAT:

Protecting Music: Focus on Intellectual Property Rights

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html>

Please join Mr. Neil Turkewitz of the Recording Industry Association of America for a live discussion of IPR on February 16, 2006. Register at usinfowebchat@state.gov.

Links

- **Focus on Intellectual Property Rights.** (U.S. Dept. of State/IIP)
<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/intelprp/>
(A new, illustrated publication that explains the ins and outs of intellectual property rights (IPR) -- patents, trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets, and new forms of intellectual property)
- **Intellectual Property: Yours, Mine, and Ours**
Language and Civil Society. An English Teaching Forum Electronic Journal
<http://exchanges.state.gov/Forum/Journal/bus7background.htm>
(includes classroom applications and internet resources)

Volunteerism in the U.S.

Thousands of Americans spend a year or two volunteering in their own communities - and getting early professional experience - through the unique AmeriCorps program.



AmeriCorps volunteers helping to build a house. (Photo by Peter Shifter, AmeriCorps)

In Los Angeles, they teach in troubled schools; in Miami, they build affordable houses; in Baltimore, they try to stop the spread of HIV infections. "They" are volunteers for AmeriCorps, a program funded by the American government to encourage young people to help their communities while gaining key professional experience.

While volunteers in the program earn a stipend, the money each person gets is much less than the average American income, requiring some participants to work second jobs in order to get by. Even so, many generally agree that their experiences are worth it. "AmeriCorps taught me that volunteerism is not an episodic event," says alumnus Greg Heinrich. "You get the most meaning from it when you continue to see people and make a connection with them. That is taking ownership in your community."

AmeriCorps (<http://www.americorps.org/>) involves a network of more than 3,000 nonprofit organizations, public agencies and faith-based organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and the American Red Cross, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and the Boys and Girls Clubs. Since 1994, more than 400,000 people have served in the organization's ranks. Although the volunteers are all ages, the large majority of the 75,000 annual volunteers are ages 18 to 26, that period of their lives when they're still accumulating the experience that can help in career decisions.

Read more at <http://himag.primescapesolutions.net/english/>
"Community Service." Sally Farhat. *HI International*, February 2006

Links

- **USA Freedom Corps** <http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/>
- **Volunteering in the U.S. 2005** (U.S. Dept. of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics) <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.toc.htm>
- **Volunteerism in the U.S.** (U.S. Dept. of State/IIP) http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/life_and_culture/volunteerism.html
- **The United States: A Nation of Volunteers-** Electronic Journal (U.S. Dept. of State/IIP) <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0998/ijse/ijse0998.htm>
- **Volunteer Service by Young People. Statistics in Brief, 2004** (National Education Statistics Center) <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/2004365.pdf>

African-American History Month: February 2006

To recall and celebrate the positive contributions to our nation made by people of African descent, American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week beginning on Feb. 12, 1926. In 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial, the week was expanded into Black History Month. This commemoration has increasingly been referred to as African-American History Month, although both names are currently in use. Since 1926, The Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH) has established the national theme for the month-long celebration of African American History Month. The National Theme for the celebration of Black History Month in the year 2006 is "Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social, and Civic Institutions."

Links:

- **Black History Month** (Infoplease.com) <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/bhm1.html>
- **About the USA > Society > African Americans** <http://usa.usembassy.de/society-blacks.htm>
- **Gateway to African American History** (U.S. Dept. of State/IIP) <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/blackhis/history/homepage.htm>
- **Black History - Biographies (Thomson Gale)** http://www.gale.com/free_resources/bhm/bio/index.htm



African American Population in the U.S.

As of July 1, 2004, the estimated population of black residents in the United States, including those of more than one race, was **39.2 million**. They made up **13.4 percent of the total U.S. population**. This figure represents an increase of half a million residents from one year earlier.

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/005164.html>

President Bush's State of the Union Address, January 31, 2006

The U.S. Constitution requires that the president report to Congress "from time to time" on the "State of the Union." This constitutional requirement has evolved into the president's annual State of the Union address, which now serves several purposes. The speech reports on the condition of the United States both domestically and internationally, recommends a legislative agenda for the coming year, and gives the president the opportunity to convey personally his vision for the nation.

The tradition of the State of the Union address dates back to 1790 when George Washington, the first U.S. president, delivered his "Annual Message." In 1945, the Annual Message formally became known as the State of the Union address. It also became a television as well as radio staple as sales of television sets skyrocketed in the 1950s. In recognition of the power of television to deliver the president's words to a huge audience, President Lyndon Johnson shifted the time of the address from the traditional midday to evening when more viewers could watch.

The tradition of the opposition response began in 1966 when two Republican Congressmen, including future President Gerald Ford, delivered a televised Republican response to President Johnson's State of the Union address.

The broadcast of the State of the Union address on television and the wide national and international audience it attracts -- an estimated 43.4 million viewers watched Bush's 2004 address -- have changed the fundamental nature of the message, according to political observers.

President George W. Bush delivered his fifth State of the Union speech, Tuesday, January 31 on Capitol Hill in Washington. President Bush urged the United States to engage the international community as a means of building prosperity, security, freedom and hope around the world in his State of the Union address to the U.S. Congress and the American people. Speaking at the U.S. Capitol January 31, Bush said that in the "decisive year" of 2006, the United States must choose to exercise leadership in the world in order to secure peace and protect its citizens.



President George W. Bush delivers his fifth State of the Union speech January 31, 2006 on Capitol Hill in Washington. Sitting behind Bush at the podium are Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert and Vice President Dick Cheney. (© AP/WWP)

- **State of the Union Address by the President, January 31, 2006**
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/stateoftheunion/2006/>
(page includes web cast)
- **Bericht zur Lage der Nation** (Deutsche Übersetzung)
<http://amerikadienst.usembassy.de/>
- **C-SPAN: State of the Union**
<http://www.c-span.org/executive/stateoftheunion.asp>
(watch the President's State of the Union address and the Democratic response)

Article Suggestions

Remembering Rosa Parks. The Life and the Legacy of 'the Mother' of the Civil Rights Movement. Kevin Chappell.

Ebony, January 2006, pp. 126+

It has taken time and reverence, death and tribute for history to fully record how the events on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in December 1955 lifted America to a higher calling and Rosa Parks to iconic status. The author recounts details of that day and its aftermath, and its impact on numerous individuals who later became pivotal in civil rights history, and describes how Parks was commemorated across the nation in the days following her recent death at 92. (*Article available from your IRC upon request.*)

The Indispensable Partnership - Germany, Europe and America in the Beginning of the 21st Century. William Drozdiak.

Internationale Politik, Transatlantic Edition. Special Issue - The United States, Germany and Europe: Building a Global Agenda. Dec 2006. pp4-7

http://www.internationalepolitik.de/english/content/Special_Issue/index.html

"Since the Berlin wall crumbled and Al-Qaeda attacked the Twin Towers, the two sides of the Atlantic have been drifting apart. Today they need to realize that by leveraging their resources, ingenuity, and influence, the US and Europe can transform their Cold War alliance into a new kind of global partnership that is truly indispensable for a peaceful world order."

After Schroeder: U.S.-German Relations in the Merkel Era

Hulsman, John C. and Nile Gardiner.

The Heritage Foundation, January 11, 2006, Backgrounder #1907, 9p

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/bg1907.cfm>

The election of Angela Merkel provide the opportunity for greater transatlantic cooperation in the war on terrorism and in international efforts to address the growing threat from countries such as Iran and Syria; the easing of tensions between Germany and the United States do not, however "her-ald a fundamental transformation of the U.S.-Ger-man relationship." According to the authors, the coalition nature of the Merkel government, public opinion in Germany concerning the U.S., diverging attitudes on the role of transnational institu-tions - these factors signify an ongoing shift and mean that "the U.S. should work with Germany on an issue-by-issue basis, cooperating with Berlin on matters of closely aligned common interests but strongly opposing German policy in areas of disagreement."

Will Print Papers Survive in an Online World? Kenneth Yost.

CQ Researcher, January 20, 2006, pp. 51-71.

The nation's \$59 billion newspaper industry is facing an uncertain future even while its biggest companies are enjoying enviable profits averaging around 20 percent. Newspaper circulation has been declining for many years, especially among young adults. Now, newspapers are losing readers and some advertising to the Internet. In fact, only 52 percent of adults read the paper on a typical weekday. Many newspapers are working on redesigns aimed at making their print editions more readable. Most also have created Web sites to deliver news and information, including special features and interactive options not included in the print product. But newspaper executives are struggling to incorporate their online editions into viable business plans. Meanwhile, slipping profit margins are resulting in layoffs at several of the major newspaper companies and opening

up the country's second-largest — Knight Ridder — to a possible takeover.
(Article available from your IRC upon request.)

Some of these articles were taken from InfoAlert - InfoAlert highlights recent articles and reports from leading U.S. journals and policy sources and provides informed commentary on international and domestic issues. Many articles are available "full text"; some articles may be password-protected. More articles are available through our InfoAlert service at <http://infoalert.usembassy.de> To register for a password, please contact us at infoalert.de@state.gov.

Web Site Suggestions

Student Classroom. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

<http://nces.ed.gov/nceskids/>

The National Center for Education Statistics's web site (<http://nces.ed.gov/>) has some neat tools in its "Student's Classroom", including a handy "CreateAGraph" application that generates graphs and charts on the basis of input data.

ArtsEdge Lesson Plan: The Poetics of Hip Hop

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/3656/>

High school classroom materials focusing on the analysis of hip hop lyrics to "provide students with a greater understanding of rhythm, form, diction, and sound in poetry." Includes activities, readings, and links to related lesson plans and websites. From the National Arts and Education Network (ArtsEdge), a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Story Corps Oral History Project

<http://www.storycorps.net/>

A project inspired by the Federal Writers Project recordings of the 1930s and Studs Terkel's interviews with people from all walks of life, which demonstrated that everybody has a story to tell, and everybody wants to be listened to. Story Corps is a joint creation of NPR, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Its project staff tour the country with a mobile studio, recording oral history interviews.

Online Speech Bank

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com>

Index to and growing database of 5000+ full text, audio and video (streaming) versions of public speeches, sermons, legal proceedings, lectures, debates, interviews, other recorded media events, and a declaration or two.

The Poetry Archive

<http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/home.do>

It's one thing to read poetry on the page, and another entirely to hear poets read their own work, breathing life into their poems with the sing-song cadence of each word. In the pursuit of just such listening pleasure, The Poetry Archive has pulled together a great collection of historic and contemporary poets in performance.

Martin Luther King Archive

<http://martinlutherkingjrarchive.com/>

NewspaperArchive.com's Martin Luther King archive provides free access to thousands of original newspaper articles about Martin Luther King. A great MLK Day/Black History Month resource for teachers/students.

SignandSight

<http://www.signandsight.com/>

Signandsight.com is the English version of the German online cultural magazine Perlentaucher.de. It offers a lively and informative view of cultural and intellectual life in Germany by providing a daily review of top stories from the German-language cultural press, a weekly international magazine roundup, and many English translations of keynote articles.

Meet the Author Literary Readings in Köln

For more events - please check

http://duesseldorf.usconsulate.gov/duesseldorf/upcoming_events.html

February 6, 2006, 8:00 pm

Reading with Michael Cunningham

The author of "The Hours" will read from his new novel "Specimen Days" at Literaturhaus Köln

March 14, 2006, 8:00 pm

Reading with Dave King and Jan-Josef Liefers (part of Lit.Cologne)

Dave King will read from his new novel "Homecoming" at Gloria, Apostelnstrasse 11, Köln

March 17, 2006, 8:30 pm

Reading with Joe R. Lansdale (part of Lit.Cologne)

Polizeipräsidium Köln

March 18, 2006, 6:30 pm

Reading with John Griesemer (part of Lit.Cologne)

John Griesemer will read from his new collection of stories "Roy auf dem Dach"

Halle Kalk, Neuerburgstrasse, Köln

Impressum:

US-Generalkonsulat NRW * Amerika Haus Köln * Information Resource Center *

Apostelnkloster 13-15 * 50672 Köln *

Tel.: (0221) 20 90 147 * Fax: (0221) 20 90 157 * E-Mail: IRCCologne@state.gov

Internet: <http://www.usembassy.de/irc/>

Bitte senden Sie Ihre Kommentare an IRCCologne@state.gov

Wir nehmen Ihre Anregungen gerne auf.